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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DEPOLITICIZING PUBLIC ACTION BY POLITICIZING ISSUES, PRACTICES AND ACTORS

The role of Resilience Thinking in a program of the Cariplo Foundation*

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ABSTRACT: We are apparently living in an age of "hyperdepoliticisation". But what is meant today by depoliticization and how does this phenomenon impact upon the forms taken by political functions in contemporary complex societies? The aim of this article is that of answering these questions through a research-based analysis of the specific role played in depoliticization processes by the use of the concept of resilience and resilience thinking, analyzing the "Resilient Communities" (Comunità Resilienti) program of the Cariplo Foundation. We argue that an intertwined and complementary movement between the depoliticization of public action and politicization of collective action carried out by non-political actors exists, which does not extirpate the political from social processes, but alters its qualities, characteristics and borders. Such dual movement is composed of pro-active and reactive forms of both depoliticization and politicization, which are defined and investigated in the article, putting empirical evidence against the background of theoretical discussion.

* The article reflects a point of view largely discussed and agreed upon by the authors. G. Moini wrote sections 1, 3 and 5, while E. d'Albergo is responsible for sections 2 and 4.

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1. Investigating the role of resilience in depoliticization and politicization processes

The recent academic debate on depoliticization, initiated by C. Hay (2007) followed previous strands of literature on this topic. As reported by D. Held (2006, p. 189) H. Marcuse labelled depoliticization the eradication of political and moral questions from public life with an obsession over technique, productivity and efficiency, that is the spread of a concern about the efficiency of different means with respect to pre-given ends. However, what is meant today by depoliticization and what forms does it take? What are the relationships between this phenomenon and the forms taken by political functions in complex contemporary societies? What can the concept of depoliticization tell us about the actions carried out by different kinds of actors in order to deal with collective problems and the changes affecting these actions? More generally, what is the role played by depoliticization in the changes currently affecting "the political"?

The major forms of depoliticization have been defined as governmental, societal and discursive, implying processes of arena shift within and beyond the political-institutional systems, as well as forms of construction of collective problems that provide these changes of arena with social legitimation. As such, depoliticization may appear as a «political strategy» (Jessop 2014), which can assume and use several and differing forms and instruments. Some of these instruments are purely institutional, for example when power and responsibility are transferred from political institutions legitimated by elections to more technical agencies, or to bodies that are not democratically elected and in whose actions contentious politics is kept at arm's length (governmental depoliticization – Flinders 2008; Flinders, Bullers 2006; Fawcett, Marsh 2014). Some other instruments are discursive and consist of constructions of a cognitive and/or normative kind that inspire those processes through which collective actions (public policy making included), get their shared meanings, as well as social legitimation. To this end, we distinguish between two different but absolutely interconnected kinds of action: collective and public. The first describes «a process where actors organize for joint decision-making for one or more purposes and, in doing so, give up some of their autonomy and give up their freedom of action in favor of the joint decisions re-

garding that purpose» (Bogason 2000, p. 66). Public action, which can be considered a particular kind of collective action, regards the forms of social and political regulation that contribute to social change, solution of conflicts, mediation among interests and distribution of resources. In other words, a use of power, connected to dominion, hegemony and legitimation of choices (Lascoumes e Le Galès 2012). In particular, this regards those actions in which both decision-making and the actors involved gain legitimacy from democratic procedures.

These constructions can coincide with hegemonic imaginaries with a cognitive and normative hold (Sum, Jessop 2013, 166), which provide social actors (public policy makers included) with those means of complexity reduction that make collective and political action possible.

Thus, it is no coincidence that in the second wave of studies mentioned above, the topic of depoliticization has been framed within the historical context of the hegemony of those ideas, interests, and actors that currently prevail all over the world, which pertain to neoliberalism (Fawcett, Marsh, 2014). This also applies within the crisis experienced by traditional forms of political representation, as well as of the reinforcing of post-democratic decision making processes (Crouch, 2003; Hay, 2007; Norris, 2011). It is in this context that an «ecosystem of depoliticizing trends» (Wood and Flinders 2014, p. 153) emerges, and depoliticization even appears as a «new orthodoxy» (Marsh 2011).

Seen from this perspective, depoliticization does not look like a spontaneous and natural process, but as one brought about by intentional strategies. But what strategies? Whose strategies? What specific discursive resources and knowledge are used to provide depoliticization processes and social practices by embodying them with both legitimacy and effective tools?

The aim of this article is to answer these questions through a research-based analysis of the specific role played in these processes by the concept of resilience and resilience thinking, considered as a discursive resource of social interactions based on specific knowledge, which can be used to legitimate innovations that may trigger depoliticization processes. Resilience thinking is a social construction, or an imaginary, which has been rapidly spreading all over the world. It has become a reference frame for collective action across different fields of human actions, many of them having to do with problems usually dealt with by public actions. Such a spread has been made easier by the vagueness and malleability of the term, a reason why it has been embraced by a wide range of actors and in a multitude of contexts (*add quotation*; Wagner, Anholt 2016; Juncos 2017). On the one hand, the concept has been enthusiastically assumed as a new paradigm of individual and collective behavior to deal with environmental and

social risks. On the other hand, it has been an object of criticism, because it has a hidden depth of nihilism, burdening people with pernicious forms of subjugation and carrying "deceitful emancipatory claims that force people to embrace their servitude as though it were their liberation" (Evans, Reid 2015, 154).

Therefore, we want to explore the hypothesis that resilience is a discursive resource, a hegemonic imaginary, the use of which may, strategically or otherwise, have the effect of depoliticizing problems, issues, policies and actors and provide empirical evidence about how these processes work.

More specifically, we want to shed light on the existence and the characteristics of an intertwined and complementary movement, which does not extirpate the political from social processes, but alters its qualities, characteristics and borders. On the one hand, we focus on the role of resilience in the depoliticization of public action, that is of those forms of social and political regulation that contribute to solve social conflicts, providing mediation among interests. In other words, public action is understood here as a practice of power, connected to dominion, hegemony and legitimation of choices (Lascoumes e Le Galès 2012), in which both decision making and actors gain legitimacy from democratic procedures based on representation. We want to know if strategies and practices based on resilience thinking have effects on these actions and provide evidence of how. On the other hand, we focus on the role of resilience in the complementary politicization of supposedly non-political issues, practices and actors. Indeed, more precisely of those actors who act as either strategic promoters, or implementers of discourses and practices based on resilience as responses to risks and crises. Thus, a question this article wants to answer regards the uses and consequences of resilience as a concept that can be used strategically as a cognitive and normative resource in structuring and possibly altering the forms and meanings of collective action.

In order to answer these questions, we carried out a case study regarding an area of social (economic, political and cultural) (inter)actions that also coincides with the borders of a territorial and geographic area within which these interactions develop, and also corresponding to a specific public action territory. This area is targeted by the "Resilient Communities" (Comunità Resilienti) program run by the Cariplo Foundation (Fondazione Cariplo), a banking foundation that is very active in this area, supporting a lot of collective actions especially in the social and environmental fields.

The rest of the article is organized as follows: In section 2 we propose a brief account of the current debate on depoliticization and neoliberalization processes, as well as on meanings, patterns and heuristic uses of resilience and resilience-thinking. This section ends by taking stock of the relationships hypothesized so far between these three concepts in the social sciences and developing the resulting research questions and the

goals of our analysis. In section 3 we present the methodology and results of our research into the Cariplo Foundation's Resilience Practices program, describing the project and its implications in terms of politicization and depoliticization as far as the construction of collective problems, policy issues, community practices and consequences potentially affecting a variety of actors (public, private and social) and collective actions are concerned. Finally, in section 4 we discuss these results above all in the light of theories concerning depoliticization and politicization of collective action and discourses.

2. Depoliticization, neoliberalization, resilience: meanings, patterns mutual relations and the need for empirical evidence

- Depoliticization: meanings and patterns

Depoliticization, in one of the seminal articles on this issue (Burnham 1999), is considered as a part of a wider political process, started in the 1990s, «designed to achieve the subordination of labour to capitalist command» (pp. 51-52). It is a political strategy that makes the political character of policy making less visible. More specifically, the depoliticization of policy making permits political actors to be credible with regard to economic actors and, at the same time, to protect government action with regard to the unpopular consequences of the decision taken (Burhnam, 2001). The main advantages of this strategy mainly consist in the representation of decision-making and its stakes as technical and apolitical issues (Kettel 2008).

The academic debate on depoliticization has been recently updated by a «second wave»[1] of studies on this topic, developed starting from the idea that depoliticization represents «the dominant model of statecraft in the twenty-first century» (Flinders, Wood, 2014, p. 135). We are, using a succinct and purposeful expression coined by E. Rubin (2012), in an age of "hyper-depoliticization". In this second wave of studies, the topic of depoliticization has been better and more directly framed within the historical context of the hegemony of the ideas, interests, and actors pertaining to neoliberalism (Fawcett, Marsh, 2014), and also within the crisis of traditional forms of political representation and of the reinforcing of post-democratic decision making processes (Crouch, 2004; Hay, 2007; Norris, 2011). In this context the «ecosystem of depoliticizing trends»

[1] C. Hay (2014) argues that what is emerging it is not a second wave of study on depoliticization, but a second generation of researchers who are working on this topic.

(Wood and Flinders 2014, p. 153) emerges and depoliticization appears as a «new orthodoxy» (Marsh 2011).

Developing on a previous theoretical proposal by C. Hay (2007), the most recent analysis of depoliticization describes it in multidimensional terms. Three main forms of depoliticization are identified: i) a governmental depoliticization that transfers issues from the governmental arena towards non-governmental bodies or technocratic structures; ii) a societal depoliticization that favours a shifting of issues from the public sphere towards the private sphere (individuals, families and/or communities); iii) a discursive depoliticization that transfers towards the realm of necessity (Wood and Flinders 2014, p. 165). In discursive depoliticization the role of knowledge and expertise is crucial and contributes significantly to the transformation of political issues into technical ones.

It is important to consider «what kind of vocabulary, lexicon, arguments» (de Leonardis 2013, p. 130) the processes of depoliticization use. One initial form of depoliticization appears particularly significant in which political discourses refer to expertise, technical knowledge, science, and the objectivity of numbers. Using these kinds of discursive devices, public choices are defined as the result of «objectives and trends and are naturalised and consequently inescapable» (de Leonardis 2013, p. 131). A second important form of depoliticization is that which refers to the prefiguration of desirable scenarios, imaginaries (Sum and Jessop 2013), and collective seductions, which construct «a specific normative force, which indicates what and how aspire» (de Leonardis 2013, p. 132).

In point of fact, if we want to better understand the processes of depoliticization of public action we cannot detach them from the related politicization processes of several kinds of social practices. Before discussing what the social practices are and how they can acquire political features a short and preliminary theoretical analysis of the relationship between depoliticization and politicization processes is needed. Moving from a broad definition of politics, such as «the realm of contingency and deliberation» (Hay 2007, p. 79) and assuming the issues as the object of politicization, C. Hay affirms that « issues can be politicised in one of three ways: Politicization 1: promotion from the realm of necessity to the private sphere. Politicization 2: promotion from the private to the public sphere. Politicization 3: promotion from the public to the governmental sphere» (ibid.). While recognising the utility of a reflection on the arena in which the different issues are processed, in our perspective this analysis risks producing an agent-less representation of the depoliticizing/politicising dynamics undervaluing the who and how of their production. Also in the more recent research - inspired by the same analysis by C. Hay and its recent suggestion «to restore agents to the process

of politicization and depoliticization» (Hay 2014, p. 310) - the interplay between depoliticization and politicization is described without any specific theoretical reference to its players. It is defined as «the institutional and discursive movements which determine the visibility of an issue, and the extent to which it is a target of political agency and the subject of policy making» (Beveridge and Naumann 2014, p. 278). In brief, these conceptual frames are not very useful for carrying out an in depth-analysis both of the actors (with their specific interests) and the operational mechanisms of the relationship between depoliticization and politicization. Consequently, we assume the practices of resilience and their main actors as the main empirical references of our analysis. Drawing a distinction between the issues, actors and practices of depoliticization and politicization may prove to be very fruitful both in theoretical and empirical terms, because, as we will see in the following pages, while the practices of resilience and the economic and social actors that promote and implement them can be politicised, public action on the various targets of resilience practices can be, at the same time, increasingly depoliticized.

The politicization of the practices and of the main actors of resilience are the main empirical reference of our research. We chose this research objective for several reasons. First of all, practices imply frames, interests, actions and values (Rein 1983). Furthermore, they produce, reproduce and transform discourses (Hajer 1995, p. 44) and so work as a theory of action. In addition to these, another of their very important characteristics is that they are not «just a patterned fabric of activities, but also contain the space and artefacts that are necessary to fulfil the practice» (Wagenaar and Noam Cook 2003, p. 148). This means that they contribute significantly to the structuring of action contexts or, better, to the framing of the physical, social, spatial, and political aspects of reality. Thus practices play an important part in the construction of the real world in which we live. Summarising different definitions of the concept of practice, H. Wagenaar and S.D. Noam Cook (2003) affirm that this concept «entails action, community, situatedness, criteria, standards, warrants, knowing, dialectic, discourse, emotion and values» (p. 157). These different aspects not only represent a good empirical reference for an analysis of the depoliticizing/politicising dynamics of resilience practices, but also imply that these same practices can be developed only within a local community (a network of social relationships territorially contextualised), contributing, simultaneously, to a structuring of the same local community.

All these characteristics allow us to think about practices of resilience in terms of a variegated pattern of action highly dependent on local contexts (site-specific), however also highly connected with some general values, beliefs or world-views. This aspect of resilience practices seems very interesting because it is also typical of contemporary

variegated neoliberalism (Peck, Tickell, 2002; Peck, Theodore 2007; Brenner, Peck, Theodore 2010).), that is to say, the historical context in which both depoliticization/politicization processes and resilience strategies take shape.

In the most recent academic debate on depoliticization some authors (Hay 2007; Madra and Adaman 2014) define it as a sort of product of the neoliberal discourse which emphasises and promotes mistrust towards politics, or also as an extension of neoliberal governmentality (Foster and Kerr 2014) In partially different terms, depoliticization can be considered a strategic and useful resource in order to promote and strengthen market-oriented forms of public action, that is a specific instrument of contemporary roll-out neoliberalism. From this perspective, depoliticization is a sort of «political strategy» (Jessop 2014) of neoliberal public action, that can assume and use several and differing forms and means. Undoubtedly the theoretical choice of placing the depoliticization process within the framework of neoliberalism can run the risk of superimposing the heuristic ambiguity of neoliberalism on the concept of depoliticization. Indeed, there are in fact many outstanding critical analyses of the concept neoliberalism (e.g. Barnett 2005; Kipnis 2007; Hilgers 2011; Goldstein 2012; Collier 2012; Peck and Theodore 2012; Jessop 2013) and recently R. Venugopal (2015, 166) defined it «as a broad, catch-all term» (p. 166). It is considered a slippery concept that presents important definitional, descriptive, analytical and normative limits (Pinson and Morel Journel 2016). In brief, critical analysis of neoliberalism suggests giving it up and finding « terms that would allow us to think better» (Clarke 2008, p. 145). While acknowledging that « the identification of both minimum common aspects and those through which neoliberalism and neoliberalization should be operationalized for empirical and theoretical purposes has still to be done and looks a lot like being a collective effort based on cumulative research and theorization» (d'Albergo 2016, p. 333). It also true that the concept of neoliberalism can permit a better representation of contemporary forms of social organization. From this perspective Dardot and Laval (2013, p.14) argue that «the originality of neoliberalism is precisely its creation of a new set of rules defining not only a different "regime of accumulation", but, more broadly, a different society». A sociological perspective on neoliberalism (Moini 2016) seems highly useful both in the analysis of resilience and in its relationship with the dynamics of depoliticization. From the sociological perspective, resilience basically regards «the factors which enable social groups, institutions, organizations, societies or social systems to deal with various disruptive processes and to regain stability» (Maurer 2016, p. 2) and consequently it can be easily framed within the more general «comprehensive long-term reform effort at retatting the entire fabric of society» (Mirowski 2009, p. 431) typical of neoliberal public action.

- Resilience: meanings, patterns and heuristic use

The notion of resilience, as is well known, is used in many different disciplines (from the natural sciences to the social ones) with different semantic nuances and has a long theoretical history (Pizzo 2014). For our purposes the socio-political definitions of resilience are most important and from this perspective resilience appears as a resource used by social actors, groups and organizations, which have to deal with disrupting events or crises, and this kind of resource can be defined and analysed using different sociological approaches (Maurer 2016). W. Bonß (2016) uses a very broad idea of resilience considering it as a rearranging and adapting capacity of social behaviour in situations of risk and crisis. More precisely, resilience «refers to a changing attitude towards uncertainty» (Bonß 2016, p. 21) and it can be differentiated between reactive (simple) and proactive (reflexive) forms: while the former refer «to an immediate reaction to large-scale damage» the latter regard « how an event of large-scale damage could be prevented» (p. 20). In similar, but partially different terms, H. Vollmer (2016) again considers resilience as «an attribute of individuals or collectives that struggle with but do not succumb to disruptions» (p. 178), while R. Mayntz (2016), reflecting on the contemporary international financial crises, asserts that resilience« can only be attributed to social entities that have the character of a system» (p. 65).

The concept of resilience is used not only in scientific disciplines. Precisely because it carries normative meaning, it has become part of the common language used in the public sphere to refer not only to natural disasters, but also to economic processes and contexts. For example, according to The New York Times the fact that "the jobless rate dropped to 4.4 percent in April, the lowest level in more than a decade" is "signalling the economy's resilience"[2]. Grosvenor, "one of the of the world's largest privately owned property businesses", does commercially motivated research into resilience, in order to "create portfolios of real estate assets which are resilient and operate in emerging markets fully cognisant of the risks", while "resilience allows cities to preserve capital values and generate sustainable rental income in the long term" (Grosvenor 2014, 5). This has also impacts on policy making. By now, resilience, conceived of as "the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, adapt and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks" (European Commission 2012, 5), is a keyword of EU policies in various fields. For example, in for-

[2] The New York Times, Jobless Rate at 10-Year Low as Hiring Grows and Wages Rise, May 5, 2017 (https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/05/business/economy/jobs-report-unemployment.html?emc=edit_th_20170506&nl=todaysheadlines&nlid=19313529&_r=0)

eign policy, resilience is the paradigm currently inspiring EU Global Strategy, aiming at enhancing resilience in both states and societies, which includes improving good governance, accountability, and creating a better space for civil society to act" [3], and in the field of humanitarian aid, through the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative[4]. As regards sustainability, the European Political Strategy Centre (the in-house think tank of the EU Commission) considers resilience a complementary concept, as it "seeks to define measures that would allow societies to bounce back after a crisis to the pre-crisis situation", while "a sustainable society would seek to prevent a crisis, which would be a policy setting process based on learning. Resilience accepts the crisis as unavoidable, but seeks to limit the consequences" (EPSC 2014). Nevertheless, this governmental think tank resorts to resilience when addressing the future of the European economy, climate and mobility, commitment to innovation (in order to make society resilient in the face of crisis), resilient skills and resilient workers, and so on. The same can be said about the policy language of international organizations such as the IMF and the OECD while, as a result of the action of these organizations, resilience is also now a keyword of national policy, such as in the Italian one.

These are very broad uses of the concept of resilience and, even though indirectly, can contribute to naturalizing social and economic problems, risks, and crises. The implicit demotion, in the resilience discourse, of the roots of the crises from the economic, social and political realm to the natural realm, risks generating a dangerous misunderstanding by overlooking both those structural and agency factors underlying crises or social and economic suffering. As noted by D.F Lorenz and C. Dittmer (2016, p. 27) «mainstreaming as well as essentialization, conceal the transformative potential of the resilience concept and inadvertently work to preserve existing power relations without taking into question the underlying structural root causes of vulnerability, resilience and disasters».

In brief, «resilience can be understood as a dispositif or apparatus» (Ibidem) of contemporary neoliberal governmentality. In other analysis devoted to exploring the relationship between neoliberalism and resilience, the latter is defined in more nuanced terms, defining it as «the capacity of groups of people bound together in an organiza-

[3] https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/resilience-new-eu-foreign-policy-paradigm-pragmatist-turn; https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/state-and-societal-resilience

[4] In 2014 this Initiative developed instruments such as a Resilience Marker General Guidance and a related Assessment Card, as well as Resilience Compendium of Good Practices aimed at showing how the resilience approach is being translated into reality by the EU, by governments, other donors, agencies, civil society organizations and vulnerable communities (http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/resilience_en).

tion, class, racial-group, community, or nation to sustain and advance their well-being in the face of challenges to it … we conceptualize social resilience broadly to encompass the capacities of societies to cope with many kinds of challenges» (Hall and Lamont 2013, p. 2).

- Relations between resilience, depoliticization and neoliberalization

There is an initial and quite recent debate on the relationships between resilience – as a concept that not only contributes to meaning making in collective action, but is also giving rise to a policy paradigm – and neoliberalism, as well as on its role in depoliticization processes.

As regards the first aspect, as a consequence of the ambiguity and contentiousness of the concept, as well of its political and strategic uses, opinions are rather polarized. On the one hand, some scholars consider resilience to be "easily captured by neoliberal ideology, to prioritize the status quo, and importance of self-reliance, flexibility and role of 'self-correcting' market adjustments" (Martin and Sunley 2015, 8). Moreover, it can be used to support or reproduce neoliberal practices (Joseph, 2013; Reid, 2012; Walker & Cooper, 2011) and forms of government, as well as the hegemony of US ideas in international contexts (Joseph 2013). As a result of an ontopolitical process of objectification and of the constitutive effect of practices, "resilient populations" themselves are to be considered a conceptual object and referent of governance, more precisely "an interpretation of social behavior determined by, and supportive of neoliberalism" (Zebrowki 2013, 170). Resilience is "fully compatible with neoliberalism and its promotion of risk, along with its private commitment to care for the self" (Evans, Reid 2015, 157). Because of the importance of people's or communities' responsibilization in facing adversities and crises, resilience can also be interpreted from a Foucauldian perspective as "a form of neoliberal governmentality producing neoliberal subjects" (Joseph 2016, 371) and disciplining either individual citizens or states, governments and elites (Joseph 2013). This is ascribed to the emphasis put by resilience thinking on "the promotion of ontologies of vulnerability instead of ontology of oppression" (Evans, Reid 2015, 157), based on adaptation, partnership, self-reliance and the responsibilization of individuals, as opposed to the state, as well as to its "ideological fit with a neoliberal philosophy of complex adaptive systems" (Juncos 2017). This functionality is increased by the economic recession and the austerity responses, both understood as part of an unbalanced world that has to be taken for granted (Pizzo 2014).

Sum and Jessop (2013, 312; 322) mention the incorporation of "resilience as a social innovation", which is produced through negotiations over meanings and practices, as

an aid to the reinvention, recoding, selection and retention of the discourse of competitiveness. In turn this negotiation shows how "neoliberal developmentalism re-embeds itself through a socially responsible and environmentally friendly agenda". For example, in the field of development, the use of resilience concept by practitioners and agencies runs the risk of reproducing the mainstream and hegemonic knowledge paradigms, market focused and underpinned by neoliberal assumptions (Walsh-Dilley, Wolford 2014, 177).

On the other hand, some authors stress the political elasticity of resilience thinking. Although frequently associated with Conservative right-wing politics, as well as being depicted as some sort of neoliberal Trojan horse used to advance their causes, resilience is "becoming a popular concept among oppositional groups, green campaigners, anti-capitalist activists, and various anarchist-autonomist movements", and also used to support communitarian views. This is so because resilience has a "potential for progressive change" and "the perceived danger of resilience theory to be (ab)used by reactionary political forces and neoliberal ideologues world-wide is highly exaggerated" (Mykhnenko 2016). Moreover, complexity itself induces us to rethink governance critically as resilience approaches do, going beyond "actually existing neoliberalism", understood as a highly interventionist and regulatory set of diverse policy practices. From this perspective, these are the opposite of resilience-thinking, "where governance is no longer a matter of intervening in an external problematic but of self-reflexive understandings of entanglement" (Chandler 2014, 51).

Resilience has also been explicitly related to political change. This doctrine "has extended into global and local forms of political reasoning in ways that are radically changing the logic of governance and political rule" and "rewriting the rules of the political game by appealing to the universal survivor in all of us" and forcing us "to become active participants in our own de-politicization" (Evans, Reid, 156). In particular, resilience thinking has been associated with depoliticization processes in the field of international relations, in which pragmatic local responses (rather than responses given by external/international/Western actors) to crises (such as conflicts and/or poverty) are invoked in the name of resilience, since it implies adaptation to the complexity and uncertainty brought about by unpredictable threats and to live with, rather than eliminate, uncertainty (Juncos 2017, 4). Since sources of risks and stress, like crises, cannot be removed, complexity and uncertainty are rather to be regarded as and possibly transformed into opportunities. Their consequences must be dealt with through local and societal agency, fostering pragmatic, adaptive capacities and capabilities, like that of innovation achieved through learning. Thus, resilience calls into question subjectivity and agency, as well as social factors, such as for example networking or loyalty, sup-

porting the processes based on a subjective overcoming of threating events, that is helping to reestablish either codes, values or utility expectations during and after disruption (Maurer 2016).

These processes and their cultural and political legitimation through resilience have been considered as a tendency to depoliticize issues by shifting responsibility without power onto the governed (Joseph 2013; 2016), who are asked to perform resilient modes of subjectivity. On the one hand, this happens by transforming the form of external interventions from a "transplantation" of solutions and policy processes from one society to another, which undermines local sovereignty, into actions aimed at enabling local resilience, thus respecting local autonomy. On the other hand with actions like these, problems such as conflicts and poverty are taken out of the political sphere (Chandler 2015). The effectiveness of answers based on resilience is found in a "spectrum of interactions and engagements between policy and the everyday which are as (seemingly) effective as they are (apparently) apolitical" (Brassett et al. 2013, 221, quoted in Juncos 2017). This effectiveness regards how responses address problems and not their causes. As a consequence, much like it was noted when considering the relationships between resilience and neoliberalism. The causes of social (but the same could be said about environmental or economic) problems are not the object of intervention and are removed from the political frameworks of critique (Chandler 2015),

Therefore, in this context depoliticization has, above all societal features, of which specific evidence can be found in the "micro" scale of these responses, because of a renewed focus on local, responsible, everyday practices and bottom-up micro-processes heralded by so-called "pragmatic sociology" (Juncos 2017).

Finally, depoliticization and neoliberalization meet each other when, in order to tackle poverty ,"the key to resilience is the self-actualising individual or community with access to market opportunities" (…) a type of resilience thinking that "depoliticizes poverty and seeks to resolve vulnerability through market mechanisms, entrepreneurship and self-exploitation" failing to address the structural conditions of poverty (Walsh-Dilley, Wolford 2014, 175).

So far, the relations between resilience as a normative concept and the processes of depoliticization and neoliberalization have been the object more of hypotheses and claims than of confirmation through empirical research. Therefore, we aim at achieving evidence about the role played by resilience thinking in these processes. In particular, we have analysed the CF's program "Resilient Communities" looking for confirmation of market-based or community-based responses to environmental, economic and social risks taking over the role of the state. Such evidence could be provided by forms of reasoning and action based on compatibility between entrepreneurialism and envi-

ronmental concerns, in which individuals and/or communities are made to feel responsible through active adaptation. Do these forms of action coincide with those arena shifting processes the ideal type of "societal depoliticization" is based on, such as those entrusting the management of collective problems to societal agency? Does such agency replace public policy, or assign to it a complementary role within a collective action led by non-public actors? Does resilience provide an imaginary that is used strategically as a sort of "regime of truth" in order to reach the argumentation-based (and knowledge-based) cognitive and normative convergence which corresponds to the ideal type of "discursive depoliticization"?

3. The Resilient Communities Program of the Cariplo Foundation and the role of Resilience Thinking

In the context of neoliberalization and depoliticization a number of actors who are supposed not to be "political" take part in the collective actions aimed at tackling environmental, economic and social problems. This regards not only actors that mobilize ideas, such as mass media and a variegated ensemble of think tanks and consulting firms, but also actors who support ideas through financial muscle, although not necessarily pursuing profit directly. Among them, philanthropic organizations connected to prominent banks (foundations like Fondazione Cariplo and Compagnia di San Paolo, both shareholders in the leading banking group Intesa Sanpaolo) are gaining prominence in Italy and are emerging as potential key actors in local governance, since they produce goods, deliver services, tackle collective problems by supporting the actions of public and private organizations through their use of financial resources. The commitment of banking foundations and banking groups such as Intesa Sanpaolo is that of integrating "social and environmental responsibility into its business strategies", in order to create shared values in the community and local areas[5]. This philosophy of action is coherent with an adherence to the principles of sustainable development and international initiatives such as the UN Global Compact. This makes it possible for them on one hand to influence policy paradigms by acting as public policy supporters, service providers and policy makers and on the other hand to produce their own policies. The

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Http://www.group.intesasanpaolo.com/scriptIsir0/si09/sostenibilita/eng_wp_sostenibilita.jsp#/sostenibilita/eng_wp_sostenibilita.jsp

balance between these two models of policy action changes according to some characteristics of urban governance (Ravazzi 2016).

Before diving into the case of Cariplo Resilient Communities Project (CRP) it seems useful to briefly describe the Cariplo Foundation (CF) and its main strategies[6]. CF is a private foundation established in 1991 of banking origin which offers grants and manages the assets accrued over 180 years by Cassa di Risparmio delle Province Lombarde. CF is one of the main institutional shareholders in Intesa San Paolo plc. one of the main European banking groups. As a philanthropic organization, CF works mainly in four main sectors: environment, culture, scientific research, and welfare services. For historical reasons, it is strongly connected to Milan and the Lombardia region, which are the territorial targets of its initiatives. Alongside its financial power (it is ranked among the ten main philanthropic foundations in the world) we find it has a very compelling power in the field of new ideas and, not surprisingly, one of its main slogans is «to give ideas a future». This slogan is better seen in its mission to make economic and project resources available to help third sector organizations carry out activities in the public interest. Coherently with its main principles of subsidiarity and self-organizing communities, CF does not intend to substitute civil society organizations but, rather, to flank and support them in their activities. What seems even more interesting is the specific strategy developed by CF, centred on its capacity to anticipate community needs fostering innovation. In its own words, it « acts as an entity that anticipates emerging needs - or selects deep-seated yet still unmet needs - tries new solutions to respond more effectively and less expensively to them, and ultimately makes its best endeavors to disseminate successful solutions». The CRP fits in very well with this kind of strategy. It also interesting to note that CF develops its strategy by means of a very well defined logical and operational frame based on ad hoc plans that «are true milestones that marked the Foundation's growth and development and allow it to fully express its potential within strategic guidelines that can be either general or specific in nature». The basic tool is the "Multi-year Framework Plan". It «defines the scope of the Foundation's activities, framing its mission and role in relation to the specific time and place in which the Foundation operates». This Framework Plan is subsequently implemented in "Action Plans", that « set out specific project objectives, i.e., the role the Foundation can play in a given area». The whole logical and operational framework serves to ensure that «the Foundation's activities – grants and above all small scale projects – are consistent with its strategic objectives».

[6] All the information on the CF is drawn from its website: http://www.fondazionecariplo.it/en/the-foundation/index.html (last visited on April 24 2017).

The overall coverage of economic, ideational, organizational, and managerial resources makes CF – using the word of one of the experts interviewed in our research - a «key actor of policy making within Milanese area». This pivotal role assumes even more importance considering not only the context of the contemporary fiscal crisis of Italian local governments and of the national pressures to put public finances in order (which implies cutting their spending and services), but also the aim of CF to develop a systematic evaluation of its project and activities. This evaluation does not have the sole role of improving accountability in the use of CF's economic resources, but also of helping «the Foundation as well as public decision-makers schedule their programs». In brief, CF evaluates; disseminates ideas; finances – subject to logical conditions – projects; anticipates social needs; fosters new solutions to social problems; develops both strategic frameworks and specific action plans; and provides insights for planning and actions by policy makers.

The CRP started in 2014 with the first invitation for tender bids entitled Resilient Community (Comunità Resilienti). This call for bids was promoted by the "Environment Area" of CF and started considering the negative consequences of the Western economic development model based on the consumption of fossil fuels and natural resources. With the aim of contrasting this unsustainable tendency, CF promoted the development of new efforts geared towards increasing adaptive responses and framing a scenario of social development. These responses and scenario found their main theoretical and operational architrave in the concept of resilience. The general idea underlying the call for bids was that local communities have a pivotal role in the promotion and implementation of resilience practices. This project was financed to the tune of one million euro and only non-profit organizations operating in Lombardia (and in the provinces of Novara and Verbania-Cusio-Ossola) were allowed to apply for funding[7]. The first call for bids financed 12 projects. In 2015 the call was reissued, more or less with the same characteristics, financing 13 resilience projects with 1.4 million euro, while in 2016 the overall funding was 1.3 million euro financing 14 projects and in 2017 yet again 1.4 million.

CF, in order to foster the CRP, had recourse to its usual main resources: money, values, ideas, knowledge, and managerial abilities. In fact, it also promoted the establishment of an Observatory on Resilience Practices (ORP) in partnership with the Politecnico of Milan, Politecnico of Turin, the University Consortium for Socioeconomic and Environmental Research (founded by the University of Molise, University of Tuscia,

[7] All the information on the CF is drawn from its website: http://www.fondazionecariplo.it/en/the-foundation/index.html (last visited on April 24 2017).

University of Ferrara), and the ResilienceLab Association. This Observatory[8] has a very important role because it is the first Italian body devoted both to analysing the concept of resilience and promoting the implementation of resilience practices. In particular, it aims at promoting the capacity building processes of those local communities and institutional actors that want to develop resilience practices and enhance networking between different actors and players in the field of resilience, including both those funded by the CRP and others in Italy with other sources of funding.

The CRP has been analyzed within the heuristic frame of interpretive policy analysis (Fischer and Forester 1993; Fischer 2003; Wagenaar 2011) in which the meanings of public action can be unveiled analyzing the artefacts produced by the different actors that take part in the action (Yanow 2000). Meanings imply values, belief, and sentiments and are expressed by words, discourses, narratives, and symbols. They also imply interests and world-visions and consequently are important because they can shape different and specific courses of action. Using this perspective in our research we analysed many artefacts: the projects and the presentation posters for the same projects produced by the different non-profit organizations, which applied for financing from the CF; the websites of these organizations as well as those of single projects, of the CF, of the ResilienceLab Association, and of the ORP. In particular, we focused our attention on the data-base of resilience practices implemented by the ORP on which are stored not only the projects financed by the 2014 and 2015 CF call for bids, but also other initiatives on resilience developed in Italy and not only in the Lombardy region. We also carried out non-participatory observation during the Forum on Resilience Practices 2017 in Milan. On that occasion, we also carried out several informal interviews with different kinds of participants in the Forum (third sector actors, local administrators, experts, practitioners, etc.). In addition, we carried out three in-depth interviews: one with an academic involved in the project who knows the CF and the political, social, economic, cultural, and historical characteristics of the "Milanese area"; one with a manager of the CF "environmental area" and one with a CRP and ORP manager.

The starting point for analyzing the relationship between the CRP and the processes of depoliticization of public action was an in-depth analysis of the projects stored on the data-base set up by the ORP. Of the 76 projects on the data-base, which had been gathered by the Observatory all across Italy, including practices not funded by the CF, we selected all the 25 projects financed in 2014 and 2015 by the CF Resilient Community call for bids. We analysed the content of the different projects, as well as their project posters as useful symbolic elements of those projects and collected other infor-

[8] All the information on Observatory drawn from its website: http://www.osservatorioresilienza.it.

mation from the web-sites of the different organizations involved in the projects. Using this empirical material we considered first of all the main social and collective problems which the projects are intended to address. The projects regard three main sectors of action defined by the CF in terms of: urban regeneration, agri-food and resource chain flows, adaptation to climate changes and territorial risk. The majority of the projects regard the food chain and resource flows (16), while those projects regarding urban regeneration and climate changes number respectively 4 and 5.

The projects in the area of agri-food and resource chain flows define resilience in different ways. First of all it is defined as a collection of practices able to safeguard farmland and agricultural crops from absorption for other purposes (Agroecologia in Martesana; Terra e Cibo; Re-Silos;Agricol-lura) and abandonment (GE.COO.FOR; La capra bionda; Pomatt;Terra Vi.Va). Alongside this specific idea of resilience, we found a more general definition of it in the more consolidated terms of sustainability. This definition regards mainly community garden projects (Ti prendo e ti ORTO; Tre parchi in filiera; Orti resilienti di Carate Brianza). All these definitions consider resilience as a useful means for tackling threats towards agricultural and farmland. Other projects consider it in more general terms as general purpose (Spighe sostenibili) or also as a culture that «has to be embraced by local communities» (For(m)aggio).

In the field of urban regeneration, the concept of resilience seems less important than in the other two areas. In fact, in two projects (Il sistema Lombardo di Garanzia Partecipativa; Non solo lago) the concept is not even explicitly present, while in the other two the idea of resilience is associated with specific actions (Cantieri Rinverditi) or good (micro) practices such as the creation of environmental, artistic, self-production laboratories and didactic initiatives (Crazy-lienza). We could define these definitions of resilience as minimalist.

The last area of resilience projects regards adaptation to climate change and territorial risks. Here resilience is thought of as a capacity to react (Esserci!) to climate changes, or also in terms of practices that could be useful to prevent the disastrous consequences of climate change (Foreste in Comune; Adapt Oltrepò Pavese). In more general terms resilience is considered a sort of «adaptability capacity aimed at reducing the consequences of climate risks» (Il fiume chiama).

In all these projects resilience appears to be a belief (carrying both values and tools for action) coming from the outside of the specific (local) field of action, a solution in search of problems. The malleability of this “global” concept helps to adapt it to different kinds of places and problems and to inform a rather wide repertoire of instruments through which it is implemented locally in the projects. This highlights an apparent contradiction, which is similar to the one existing at a larger scale, because of the es-

sentially top-down processes based on the standardization of instruments and policies proposed by organizations such as consulting firms and various kinds of carriers of knowledge (Coppola 2016) like in our case the CF. In these processes, local knowledge and collective learning are at risk of being more an object of rhetoric than the real cognitive basis of collective action.

The representations of resilience proposed in the different projects can be grouped together in a first tentative typological scheme using two main variables. The first one regards the logical characteristic of the definitions proposed, which can be minimalist (when they consider very simple and basic aspects of resilience) or broad (when they consider wide-ranging aspects of resilience). The second one, instead, regards the substantive content of definitions and can consider resilience as a tool (when resilience is considered in instrumental terms, that is to say as a means for achieving an end) or as an aim in itself (when resilience is defined in terms of the purpose of collective action). Crossing these variables and their dichotomous modalities we obtain a typological space of attributes in which we can insert the different types of representation.

Figure 1 - A typology of resilience representations

		Resilience as tool or aim	
		Tool	*Aim*
Definition of resilience: Minimalist vs. Broad	*Minimalist*	**Micro-activities** (*e.g. Sistema Lombardo Garanzia partecipativa; Cantieri Rinverditi; Crazy-lienza*)	**Adaptability/reactionary capacity** (*e.g. Esserci; Foreste in Comine; Adapt; Il fiume chiama)*
	Broad	**Sets of practices** (*Agroecologia in Martesana; Terra e Cibo;Re-Silos;Agricol-lura) and abandonment (GE.COO.FOR; La capra bionda; Pomatt;Terra Vi.Va)*	**Culture/value** (*Spighe sostenibili; For(m)aggio)*

In the first upper-left side cell we find minimalist definitions of resilience conceptualized as a tool. Here the micro-activities of resilience can be grouped together, that is to say very site-specific and localized resilience experiences. In the upper-right side cell we find again minimalist definitions of resilience but conceptualised as an aim. Here the adaptability and/or reactionary capacities of territories and local communities are stressed. In the third bottom-left side cell we find broad definitions of resilience con-

ceptualised as a tool. Here complex and more articulated practices of resilience can be placed. In the last cell (bottom-right side) we find broader representations of resilience both in logical and substantive terms. Here resilience is considered a culture and/or a value that can drive choices and actions. The representation of resilience as micro-activities prevails in the project regarding the process of urban regeneration, while in the project linked to climate change the ideas of resilience as adaptability and or a re-actionary capacity tend to prevail. The projects implemented in the last area, that is to say in agri-food and resource chain flows, tend to be distributed between a representation of resilience as entire practices (more) and as culture and/or value (less). These uses are made possible by the malleability of resilience as a concept, or imaginary inspiring concrete practices, as noticed in literature referring to it (see above).

4. Evidence on depoliticization and politicization in the Program

Using the same data-base we also identified projects in which public actors (both local government such as Municipalities, Municipality unions, Mountain communities, and university departments) are present as partners. We found in the majority of cases (18 out of 25 cases) that public actors are involved. This predominance is interesting because it offers the chance to better analyse the dynamics of the depoliticization of public action. Assuming the theoretical definitions of governmental, societal, and discursive processes of depoliticization mentioned above as a starting point, we analysed the projects and other connected elements with the aim of verifying if the characteristics typical of these processes could be found within them. The first step was an analysis of the prevailing type of depoliticization in the different projects. We found clear evidence of depoliticization in 17 cases, in which processes of societal depoliticization (SD) prevail. Within them 12 projects regarded agri-food and resource chain flows, 3 concerned the issue of urban regeneration, and 2 regarded climate change. As a whole these projects permit us to highlight interesting empirical characteristics of SD. First of all we found a recurring responsibility shifting from the public to the private sphere in actions aimed at contrasting different kinds of social problem. Just to take one example, in the Agroecologia in Martesana project the issue of urban sprawl and the related absorption of land is not an object of direct action by the Municipality involved in the project (Municipality of Cassina de Pecchi), but it is tackled by offering the non-profit organization leading and managing the initiatives (Mani Tese Association) a portion of land to develop a community garden, spaces for a school canteen, and spaces for public meetings. The driving belief is that these actions – as declared by the Municipal As-

sessor for participation, environment, ecology, and youth policy – «can favour the creation of a School of good sustainable practices»[9]. It is barely needed to note that structural territorial problems such as urban sprawl and the absorption of agricultural land, linked to the main strategy of economic and spatial development of contemporary cities, which fall within the normal competence of municipalities, are contrasted with the wish to create good social practices. Since these problems have also structural, exogenous and trans-scalar causes, this belief seems could them of urban sprawl unresolved, while unloading responsibility for them onto civil society. Analogous tendencies can be identified in other projects characterised by SD. In Cantieri Rinverditi the main social problem is decay in spaces designed to accommodate new building. Also in this case, the public actor prefers to activate civil society by sustaining compensative micro-actions, such as practices of preverdissment, rather than take direct action on the problem. Lastly but not least, good examples of SD can be found in ESSERCI! La Resilienza Circolare di Seveso and Terra e Cibo. Those issues concerning the protection and enhancement of natural heritage and the ungoverned impact of urban mobility on health and the quality of life of the local community (ESSERCI!) and of use of agricultural land, climate change, pollution, unsustainable consumption and unemployment, and a lack of expertise in public administration (Terra e Cibo) are typically issues on which public actors are supposed to act. Instead the solution is sought in the creation or strengthening of existing cooperative networks among social actors (ESSERCI!) or in the construction of a resilient community (Terra e Cibo).

The projects analysed show an interesting common feature. We did not find clear evidence of discursive depoliticization of the issues in the sense of their demotion from the public sphere and their displacement into the realm of a natural occurrence. We rather found a sort of general "carelessness" with regard to the causes of the social problems tackled and a discursive convergence carrying both cognitive and normative effects. In this regard, the causes of the problems mentioned are never defined in political, economic or social terms. Just one example can help understand this point: La Porta del Parco s.n.c project moves from «the existence of decay phenomena arising from negligence and abandonment of the areas». However, nothing is said about the reasons for and origins of the decay and abandonment. The problem exists, but it seems to exist without causes, in other words it is naturalised. Leaving problems without causes corresponds to depoliticizing them discursively. This "naturalization" of the causes of social problems risks transforming them into a sort of category of "natural facts", on which it is impossible to act. In other words, in this representation we can act

[9] Source: http://www.manitese.it/agroecologia-in-martesana-nasce-la-rete-dei-cittadini-coltivatori

only on the consequences of environmental, economic and social problems, but we do not even think to remove the structural and political causes of them.

The dynamic of depoliticization of issues and public actions is accompanied by a complementary movement of politicization of supposedly non-political forms of collective action and practices, as well as of key actors taking part in these actions. This results from our analysis of the projects funded in the "Resilient Communities" program and of the role played by the CF.

Some of the actions envisaged practically look just like public actions led by non-political actors. These actions are carried out sometimes without the involvement of political authorities, at other times involving them, but with a subsidiary role.

Evidence of politicization of these projects/practices, which occur in association with discursive depoliticization is provided by approaches and imaginaries through which collective problems are addressed. The CF invites communities (citizens and associations) to take charge of risks in terms of their consequences, often obscuring sources and responsibilities, both economic and political. For example, this regards pressure from real estate business (Agroecologia in Martesana), the impact of urban mobility on health and the quality of life (ESSERCI!), water risks (IL FIUME CHIAMA) the impact of the local and global causes of economic crises (various projects, especially for the "agri-food and resource flow" chain).

To this end sustainable development is largely present. It works as an already available imaginary that, once translated into the terms of resilience thinking, provides those actions addressing both environmental and economic critical issues with a cognitive and normative frame, which is also highly legitimated and institutionalised. This applies in particular to projects in the "agri-food and resource flow" chain (for example: FILIERA ECO-ALIMENTARE, Gestione Coordinata delle Foreste, For(m)aggio, Terra e Cibo, AGRICOL-LURA, La capra bionda, Pasturs, Spighe sostenibili, Ti prendo e ti ORTO, Il sistema Lombardo di Garanzia Partecipativa, Tre parchi in filiera). In these projects, environmental and territorial risks deriving from climate change, or the abandonment of land are tackled through the launch of new local enterprises, or by encouraging innovation and quality in agricultural production, and the consumption chain (local food chains, based on new models of behavior and frequently taking advantage of social networks based on trust). From this perspective, the local scale is of absolute importance. Environmental and territorial risks may come from very close (abandonment of land, depletion of local resources) and remote (climate change) sources. Resilience thinking as retailed by the CF shapes the practices it funds as "solutions that are appropriate to local contexts" (Fondazione Cariplo 2014), "catalyzing the resources and skills existing in the area" (Fondazione Cariplo 2015). The local dimension is an essen-

tial requisite for a project to be funded: it must specify the specific critical aspects and vulnerabilities of the local community, circumscribe the local area of intervention, and identify the local community in which the initiative will be carried out. It must consist of a local community initiative, which actually takes part in the processes of conceiving and implementing these activities (Fondazione Cariplo 2015).

Anyway, this is a way of addressing the consequences of these risks by acting locally, while somehow thinking globally, just to recall a slogan that was in fashion in civil society and social movements a couple of decades ago. Not only has "the local dimension strong importance for achieving thorough resilience" but, at both national and global scales, effects will be produced by "global and national policies promoting resilience" (ibidem). On both scales, anyway, the causes of environmental, economic and social problems are not to be tackled, what is important is "to reduce the vulnerability of local communities".

This approach also makes it possible to temper or prevent social conflicts between advocates of environmental protection and private stakeholders.

Evidence of the politicization of these projects/practices, which occur in association with societal depoliticization, is provided by the characteristics of collective action and the instruments used, which make politicization itself either implicit or explicit[10]. Implicit forms of politicization are those which fill possibly existing voids in public action.

For example, in implicit politicization some practices are aimed at solving collective problems through informal, or even formal and legal regulation, concerning individual and/or collective behavior. Evidence of this is provided by projects such as Agroecologia in Martesana (use of publicly owned agricultural land), For(m)aggio (involvement of private actors such as farmers, breeders and land owners to address environmental and hydrogeological instability), AGRICOL-LURA (upkeep of the landscape, sustainable development in agriculture, employment), Cantieri Rinverditi (management of urban spaces affected by decay)

Sometimes these goals are pursued complementing or explicitly making up for the absence of public action. Evidence of this is provided by projects such as ESSERCI! La Resilienza Circolare di Seveso (compensating for a lack of protection and enhancement of the natural heritage and for the ungoverned impact of urban mobility on health and the quality of life of the local community), Terra e Cibo (use of agricultural land, climate change, pollution, unsustainable consumption and unemployment, lack of expertise in public administration). As mentioned above, the creation or strengthening of existing

[10] We are grateful to one of the anonymous referees for this distinction, as well as for a clarification we have been able to make in the final section.

cooperative networks among social actors (ESSERCI! La Resilienza Circolare di Seveso) is a typical organizational form taken by collective action in these projects. Further evidence of politicization is the concern for the stability of innovative practices and the ways of dealing with the collective problems they are based on. For example, projects like AGRICOL-LURA are based in the implementation of those forms and tools of governance able to stabilize innovative practices over time, while others (for example Cantieri Rinverditi) supports the involvement of a municipality in a participatory process led by community actors aimed at producing a formal regulation.

Finally, the complementarity between the depoliticization of issues and public actions and the politicization of supposedly non-political forms of collective action and practices, supported by the fact that the (smaller number of) practices that we suppose to produce no (or less) effects of depoliticization are also those in which we have found no evidence of a political role played by the CF and/or the promoters of the projects funded (Non solo lago; RE-SILOS Est Ticino; L'anello sul fiume; TERRA VI.VA; Orti Resilienti di Carate Brianza).

Explicit forms of politicization are those in which private and/or social actors act explicitly as policy players. This happens when economic actors, like big firms apply codes of conduct within their supply chains, or norms for Corporate Social Responsibility, or when consulting firms provide political authorities with models for conceiving, projecting, monitoring and evaluating policy actions. In the case analyzed, the CF chose as a field of action (along with several others, listed above) the domain of environmental problems and concerns within a bounded social and territorial space, the Milanese area, in which "the community and territory are not balanced" and "political action is absent" [11]. In the past the CF had already developed knowledge and practices inspired by the paradigm of sustainability, which was and still is predominant in the environmental policies carried out at almost every scale (UN, EU, national, regional, local). Building on that and as a result of a variety of factors – the cultural awareness of some actors within the Foundation, direct interactions with academics and experts, as well as proposals from the "third sector" – the CF further developed this line of action using resilience thinking as a form of cognitive and normative leverage.

This has produced a politicization of the CF that results from its role as a virtual policy maker, so that in the CF's discourses its initiatives dealing with collective problems are often referred to as "policies" implemented[12]. In turn, playing such a role produces isomorphism as far as the CF's actions and its organizational characteristics are con-

[11] Interview with Cariplo Foundation executives in charge for environmental programs.

[12] http://www.fondazionecariplo.it/en/strategy/evaluation/restituire-conoscenza.html.

cerned, since both take forms that are typical of public action and actors. The CF acts using strategies and instruments that are normally used with two aims: that of influencing the activities carried out by public policy makers, even from upper institutional levels, and that of shaping the forms in which these activities are carried out and managed.

The first purpose is evident when promoters want to address issues that are typical objects of public action, such as the growth of local entrepreneurship and employment (For(m)aggio: riattivazione di una filiera del foraggio a scala locale; Ti prendo e ti ORTO), or to shape specific public regulations (Agroecologia in Martesana; ESSERCI – La resilienza circolare di Seveso), or influence the adoption of specific measures or demand the issuing of administrative acts and plans (Agroecologia in Martesana; ESSERCI). In order to do that the CF combines different types of leverage: the power of ideas and various policy instruments, such as conditionality and evaluation, or the hearing of experts during decision making processes.

The CF uses an ideational power – ideas being asymmetric cognitive resources – influencing public action through knowledge and imaginaries sustaining the emergence and, later, the institutionalization of new policy paradigms. It identifies issues that are potentially of collective concern but are either not dealt with by political authorities, or which may be the object of changes in the way they are dealt with. Some of them regard changes of frames, regarding both policy makers and policy takers who, for example in an urban context, signify the inhabitants (Coppola 2016). For example, the Agroecologia project in Martesana aims at changing the use of publicly owned agricultural land as an indirect way of counteracting an expansionin building development. Local governments can be the explicit target of those practices aimed at dealing with collective problems (such as urban landscape decay) that have direct political implications, such as that of promoting a "change of attitude of political decision makers with regard to situations 'frozen' in the old logics of governing/planning". In this case (Cantieri Rinverditi) the change regards the ability of public actors to recognize the virtues of a concept (le Preverdissement) carrying practical consequences for the use and quality of urban land (Craul 1999).

In other projects change regards the introduction of a new form of public action, consisting of the involvement of private stakeholders (owners of forests) in the public management of forest areas (Gestione Coordinata delle Foreste), or the sharing of competence, tools and resources between local governments and local communities (L'anello sul fiume).

This kind of role is also played when the CF supports projects that take existing models of policy to a new scale, adapting existing imaginaries to local contexts and newly

identified issues. As mentioned above, this is the case with the combination of competitiveness and sustainability: projects funded by the CF are culturally rooted in, and gain legitimacy, from this already institutionalised logic, providing answers to collective problems constructed both in economic (seizing the opportunities of sustainable development) and in environmental terms (tackling territorial decay and natural risks). Examples of projects are: Agricol-lura; Filiera Eco-Alimentare; Pomatt! - Val Formazza; Non solo lago - Alto Lario; La capra bionda; RE-SILOS Est Ticino; Pasturs). Almost all these projects are part of the program chain labelled "food supply chain and resource flows". These solutions also provide a cultural basis for preventing or alleviating conflicts between economic interests and nature conservation. This is evident in the case of the protection of wolves and bears vs. the interests of shepherds, in which the Pasturs project aims at bringing about "a better relationship of trust between environmentalists and breeders".

Resilience itself is the keyword expressing discursively a change of frame requested in public policy (for example: "resilience is for our City Council a way to be citizens" in the ESSERCI - La resilienza circolare di Seveso project; or the "culture of resilience" as a reference for collective action in the For(m)aggio: riattivazione di una filiera del foraggio a scala locale project; as a value and an end in the Spighe sostenibili project; as a means to an end, that is a theory for action in the La Porta del Parco project). The CF acts as a retailer of the global concept of resilience, adapting it to the local circumstances and potential of collective action in the "Milanese area" and providing this field of collective action with cognitive and normative structuring. In this regard, the privileged relationships between the CF and the academics are a specific asymmetry in the relations between the CF and the actors in the public sector and the third sector.

In this respect resilience thinking provides collective actions with a rational coupling of problems (risks and vulnerability of communities) and solutions (adaptation policies), as happens with the "solutions looking for problems" situations described in new-institutionalist organizational and political theory through the Garbage Can Model (Cohen et al. 1972; March, Olsen, 1989). This may happen when issues that might have potentially collective relevance are not on political agendas, or when other issues are dealt with through routine activities and not coupled with innovation streams. In cases like these, actions based on the idea of resilience provide a semiotic basis for processes of politicization of supposedly non-political actions, which at the same time fill a void in the pre-existing repertoires of public actions. This may regard the wait-and-see attitudes of public actors (for example, the Cantieri rinverditi project, in which situations of temporary decay of the urban environment are dealt with using an innovative technique, which also implies communitarian actions), as well as change of visions, regard-

ing for example the transformation of sources of environmental problems into potential resources for meeting collective needs. For the CF this is a reason for making it compulsory for bidders to prove that local political authorities are involved in the project and that information will "enhance the knowledge, awareness and capacity of action of the local community and political decision makers" (Fondazione Cariplo 2015).

For the purpose of determining the forms in which the activities are carried out and managed the CF makes use of modes of action that are widely used in policies and programs which share the aim of promoting innovation as a way of dealing with collective problems.

Firstly, this is to support small projects, but also to enable activities to be networked with each other and with other initiatives, in order to make an incremental spreading of principles and impacts possible. To this end the Resilience Projects Observatory[13] is used as the main tool. It is supported by the CF and managed by academic departments, in partnership with REsilienceLAB[14] "a network of people working on sustainability issues, adaptation, urban and territorial resilience with different looks and approaches" that "aims to support the promotion of actions and strategies of resilience". The mission of the Observatory is "to assist territorial subjects, institutions and communities in the transition toward a stronger, aware and more resilient society, through a process of capacity building", mapping the practices of resilience at a national scale, promoting scientific knowledge on this theme, developing tools in support of a spreading of resilience practices, which are offered to communities, and to private and institutional actors, thereby promoting the networking of promoters of resilience practices and the communities involved. The construction of networks composed of social (third sector, community actors, citizens, consumers, entrepreneurs) and political actors (local governments) is aimed at "putting together even small things within a larger network" [15]. This helps to spread the practices (e.g. Foreste in Comune) and to share the vision they are based on. This mode of action was and still is typical of the urban programmes of the EU (Urban, Urbact and nowadays the Urban Innovative Actions), as well as area based urban policy and research programs carried out by many states, including Italy.

In other projects the change regards a (not so as yet) new form of public action, consisting of the involvement of private stakeholders (owners of forests) in the public management of forest areas (Gestione Coordinata delle Foreste), or the sharing of

[13] http://www.osservatorioresilienza.it/?set_language=en (last visited on April 12 2017)

[14] http://www.resiliencelab.eu/index_ENG.html (last visited on April 11 2017)

[15] Interview with a member of the epistemic community of the programme analysed.

competences, tools and resources between local governments and local communities (L'anello sul fiume).

Secondly, the use of tools that are typical of public action. Approaches and methodologies in the projects analyzed recall, sometimes explicitly, those of EU programs. For example, the bottom-up strategies reproducing the LEADER program approach in the Adapt Oltrepò Pavese project; or the "control room" in the For(m)aggio project). Moreover, small projects can be both networks and chains, since part of the repertoire of actions is the search for further funding opportunities, such as those provided by the EU (Filiera Eco-alimentare).

The use of policy tools borrowed from public policy making implies relationships of power. There seems to be a contradiction between the discourse of resilience accompanied by keywords such as participation, subjectivity of activators, identification of practices from the bottom-up (Cossu, Pezzoli 2016 –slides), or the "initiative of the local community and its actual participation in the process of ideation and implementation of activities proposed" (Cariplo Foundation 2016) and the use of strictly top-down mechanisms, such as competitive bidding, funding awards, monitoring and ex-post evaluation based on indicators geared to measuring the effectiveness of the project (Cariplo Foundation 2016).

5. Final remarks: the "dual movement" of depoliticization and politicization

At the end of our analysis we can ask ourselves: what we can learn about depoliticization from the case of the CR program? What about resilience? Can we identify meaningful relationships between the processes of depoliticization, neoliberalization and resilience in this same case study? Finally, does it provide any evidence about the role played by depoliticization in the changes currently affecting "the political"?

The very wide ranging initial question can be better answered by considering more specific questions, that is to say: how does depoliticization happen? Who are its main actors? What kind of strategy do they pursue? What specific resources and knowledge are used to provide depoliticization processes? Do complementary forms of politicization emerge? In this paragraph, we will try to identify some preliminary and tentative answers to all these questions by drawing on our case study.

Our analysis regards a specific geographical area within which there are social, economic, political, and cultural interactions. More precisely, it regards a set of interdependent social, economic, political, and cultural relations with borders that have a specific territorial definition. In our case study this territorial scope coincides with – using

the word of an interviewed – the «Milanese area». Within this area, we analysed the changes and specific forms taken by actions aimed at dealing with collective problems. What is happening is that while public action is becoming increasingly depoliticized, other kinds of collective action are becoming progressively politicised. The dual movement between the complementary components of depoliticization and politicization – as we saw in the previous pages – is not new in literature and means that we cannot understand the depoliticization of public action without understanding the politicization of collective action, and vice-versa. It is exactly in this dual movement that the changes in the different forms of action aimed at resolving collective problems are shaped.

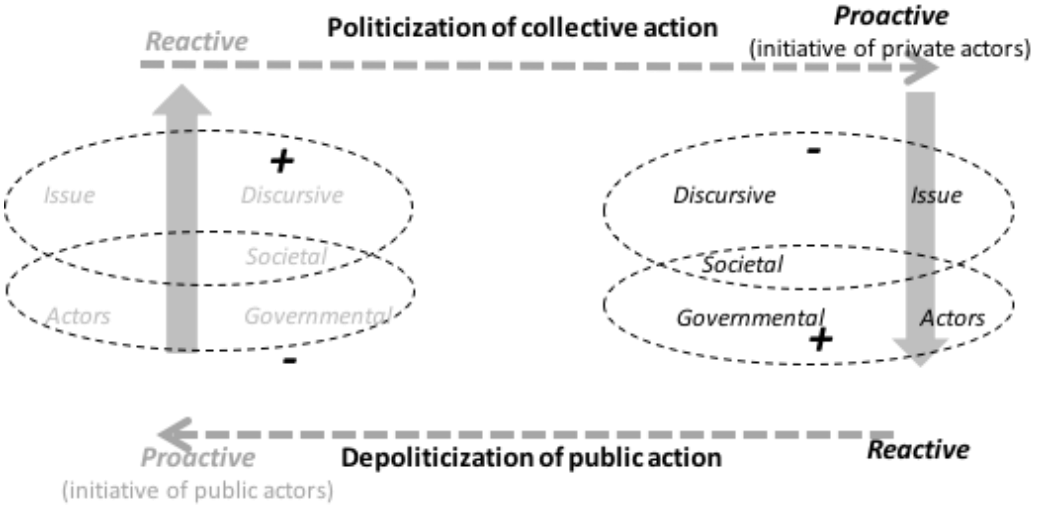
In general, if we observe this dual movement from the perspective of public action, depoliticization seems to be a powerful resource for legitimating collective choices and for reducing conflict and/or deflecting it into non-political arenas. In brief, depoliticization seems to be a decision-making resource that can be used to diminish any potential loss of consensus over painful decisions with zero-sum results, or to be aimed at remunerating the interests of specific actors. In other words, it can be considered as a resource to reinforce the hegemony of specific actors and interests. Therefore, from the perspective of public action depoliticization may appear as a deliberate political strategy (Jessop 2014) of public actors. In this case, we could label it "*pro-active depoliticization*". However, such a depoliticization of public action can even take place as a sort of answer to the political strategy activated by private or social actors. In other words, the depoliticization of public action can also result from public actors' inaction, or their adaptive reaction to the strategy of private or social actors. In these cases, there is a sort of political void that is being increasingly filled by the action of private or social actors. We could label this process as "*reactive depoliticization*".

This kind of depoliticization seems undervalued in contemporary academic debate and it can be better analysed as consequence of the politicization of specific types of collective action or better as a result of political strategy of actors that are not political in the strict sense (like political parties and leaders, elected actors and public administrations) such as, in the case analysed, CF and third sector organizations involved in CRP.

It means that we can have both *pro-active* and *reactive* processes of politicization. The first one regards forms of collective action (actors, issues and practices) pushing to entering in public and or governmental arena. It corresponds to political strategy of private or social actors. The latter regards instead forms of collective action aimed at compensating the rolling back of public actors from the governmental or public arena.

This dual movement can affect the actors and or the issue of politicization/depoliticization process and with regard to them can be developed in governmental, societal and discursive terms. The overall dynamic is synthesized in figure 2.

Figure 2 - Politicization and depoliticization



The dual and complementary movement between politicization and depoliticization is not new in the academic discussion, however the main object of the analysis in that literature is the dynamic of politicization/depoliticization of the issues. In our perspective, the dual movement can be better understood considering also the actors of that movement and the interdependencies between them, and between issues and the specific kind of politicization/depoliticization process.

The figure highlights not only the logical circularity between politicization and depoliticization, specifying that we can have reactive process of depoliticization of public action when proactive process of depoliticization of collective action exists and, viceversa, reactive process of politicization may take place as result of proactive depoliticization of public action. This is not the case in the process analysed in which, on the contrary, we found evidence of proactive processes of politicization of collective action producing reactive processes of depoliticization of public action.

Can we find also converging and more powerful process of simultaneously proactive dynamics between depoliticization of public and politicization of collective action. The figure shows also that we can consider the processes of *depoliticization* more powerful

when they arrive to depoliticize in discursive terms the issues (because they become "objects" on which it is not possible to act, or to question the underlying causes), while the more powerful processes of *politicization* correspond to governmental politicization because they can arrive to insert an issue within the decisional agenda of policy maker, construing it as a "distributed benefits" (Wilson 1980) one.

The societal form of both depoliticization and politicization is particularly important, since it results from the convergence of the governmental and discursive dimensions and at the same time is a strategic resource for building a new mix of "political" and "non-political" in dealing with collective problems.

The figure shows also that the governmental and societal processes of politicization/depoliticization are more evident considering the actors involved and the related shifting of responsibilities, while the discursive of politicization/depoliticization are more evident considering the issues considered, because of the argumentative resources used.

This complex dual movement seems undervalued in contemporary academic debate and it can be better analysed as consequence of the politicization of specific types of collective action.

The CRP project provides a good case for analysing this process focusing on: i) how it happens; and ii) what kind of consequences it determines for issues and for actors involved in public and collective action. The politicization of the Program and of the different resilience practices and the social actors involved in the management of projects funded starts with a strategic choice made by the CF foundation «to act within community and territory characterised by fragility and disequilibrium» (interview with CF manager 1). In brief the Foundation decides to intervene in the context of critical situations regarding three main sectors: urban regeneration, environmental, and the food chain. The Foundation uses a precedent and a well-developed repertory of knowledge, operational skills, and practices inspired by the sustainability paradigm on these issues. The CF foundation starts from this paradigm and, as result of «both the cultural sensibility of some key CF actors and relationships with scholars, experts and representatives of third sector» (interview with CF manager 2), develops an approach to these fragilities and issues based on the idea of resilience, also because «within the Milanese area there is nothing on the topic of resilience» (interview with the expert). Thus, the Foundation fills a void both in public action and ideas in the critical and problematic situation in the "Milanese area" financing projects aimed at promoting resilience and also sustaining networking processes between the social actors, which develop resili-

ence practices[16]. The main objective of the Foundation – as noted by the expert interviewed – is to «collect together little things within a broader network». The construction of the ORP represents an important operational and cognitive building block of the Foundation strategy. Throughout these actions resilience practices acquire a sort of critical size and progressively occupy an increasing importance within the area. Indirectly this dynamic legitimates the CF foundation as a kind of actor able to deal with social problems in which there are no public actions or they are not able to bring about innovative solutions.

In order to identify the impacts of this process both on the issues and actors of collective and public action, we have to focus on the characteristics of the politicization of the resilience practices. First of all, a discursive politicization of the issues is developed. Questions such as territorial fragility, climate change, sustainability of food-chain, consumption of agricultural soil etc., are re-defined using the frame of resilience and thus they become possible targets of collective action under a new paradigm. Simultaneously in this same process resilience becomes a sort of hegemonic meaning horizon, which describes a desirable world soaked of moral values and statements whose social legitimation and acceptation cannot be questioned. Thus, resilience thinking, by the virtue of its indisputability, becomes a system of beliefs discursively depoliticized. This is a contradiction only apparent. Conversely it displays the power of a political strategy of a private actor such as the CF foundation, which is able to politicise specific practices (those of resilience) by the depoliticization of its underlying beliefs.

Alongside this discursive politicization of the resilience practices we find also an important process of their societal politicization, consisting in the assumption of responsibility for collective problems by social actors, without the involvement of public actors or in partnership with them. The majority of the projects analysed aim at involving civil society actors, promoting networking between them, activating social resources, sponsoring participatory practices, empowering citizens and so on. There is a prevalent tendency to shift responsibility and agency capacity from public towards social actors. This kind of societal politicization, which implies a reactive social depoliticization of public action, is important also because has a meaningful feedback effect on the practices and their actors (both the Foundation and non-profit organizations which implement resilience projects). The politicization of these actors follows partially different paths, producing polarization as far as power is concerned. Acting like a policy maker FC uses conditionality (calls for bids), so that no-profit organizations may depend on it

[16] In other cases the CF does not fill public action voids, but re-directs them using their financial and ideational resources.

for pursuing their goals and unlocking their full ideational potential, just like it happens to political and administrative actors involved in the implementation of public policy.

The main effect of social politicization is the increasingly institutionalization not only of a specific (and consolidated in the local welfare sector) kind of action based on the involvement of "third sector" actors, but also of the resilience paradigm. The strategy pursued by the Foundation in financing projects characterised by what we refer to as societal politicization, consists in selecting some models of actions and differentiating them from others. This corresponds, in the theoretical frame of neo-institutionalism, to a typing process (Lanzalaco 1995). After the typing process, these practices reproduce and legitimate themselves in auto-referential terms: they are considered valid because they are spreading, but are spreading because they are considered valid. This is the second step of the process of institutionalization of resilience practices. After their auto-referential validation these practices tend to be universalised as a general frame of action and progressively taken for granted, so that their institutionalization is completed.

The progressive institutionalization of resilience practices is tantamount to a stabilization and reproduction of forms of societal politicization that characterise those practices. The consequence is that the resilience practices activated by the Foundation's CRP are seeing an increasing importance for private actors such as the CF itself and social actors such as the third sector organizations which are implementing the project, and a progressive marginalization of public actors. After all it is no coincidence that « the CF lays down the public policy agenda in Milan» (interview with the expert)?

What is the final result of the interplay between the politicization of resilience practices and the reactive depoliticization of public action? The result, considering the projects analysed as a whole, is a situation in which the role of public actors is residual or not more than a partnership with social and private actors; there is an increasing shift of responsibility towards the private sphere of individuals and/or communities (Clarke 2004); a private actor (the CF) is the main sponsor of projects aimed at tackling collective problems; many projects promote forms of assumption of responsibility and self-entrepreneurialization of the social actors involved, confirming the interpretations of resilience from the perspective of governmentality; the structural, that is to say, economic and political causes of the social and environmental problems remain unquestioned and untouched; resilience appears as a discursive resource that provides collective actions with depoliticized meanings and makes it possible for the promoter to play a hegemonic role. All of these aspects seem very coherent with the wider contemporary hegemonic neoliberal frame of public action.

Summarising, the results of the case study analysed supply some interesting insights about depoliticization, politicization, resilience, neoliberalism and their interdependencies, as well as on some changes affecting "the political".

Depoliticization/politicization. In general terms, we distinguished two types of depoliticization, which we labelled *reactive* and *proactive*. Building on this distinction we also made an effort to operationalize societal and discursive depoliticization/politicization, as well as the possible mutual relationship between these two aspects of a same process. Whereas much research on this topic has a solely theoretical character, we tried to detect concrete forms of the phenomenon referred to analysing the program and practices based on resilience thinking. The study of the CRP permitted us to underline that the dynamic of complementarity and interdependency between politicization and depoliticization processes may be fully understood by referring these processes not only to their issues (as done by C. Hay), but also to their actors and practices. In particular, in the CRP we found that the politicization of actors and resilience practices – all these activities depict CF as a powerful political actor – is connected with both resilience as a belief system and the depoliticization of public actors' role in dealing with social problems.

Resilience. The case study analysed permitted us to identify not only how resilience is defined and implemented in different sectors of action. In particular, we categorize four main types of resilience as: micro-practices; adaptability/reactionary capacity; practices taken as a whole; and culture and/ or value. This malleability of the concept and practices of resilience is one reason for its increasing spread.

Depoliticization, resilience and neoliberalism. The case study suggests that resilience, owing to its intrinsic capacity to spread depoliticized frames of action and to politicise the practices of private actors, could effectively provide contemporary neoliberalism with a powerful ideational and operational resource to reproduce itself in new and variegated forms.

This conclusion also appears consistent with the more general role that private actors, first of all Foundations, are increasingly playing in structuring the content and forms of public action. What we noticed when observing the field of resilience as an answer to environmental and economic concerns is coherent with what has been observed in the field of local welfare, in which «a new entrepreneurial subject, which possesses massive resources, can condition the quality of interventions and the whole re-engineering of social work from a private perspective through a thorough strategy based on calls for bids (…). Foundations, accredited social enterprises, and call for bids are drawing the new paradigm around which the social sector is re-structured» (Curcio

2014, pp.17-18). The program aimed at improving resilience is a minor but no less significant part of this general strategy.

"The political". Many problems affecting a territorial community need to be dealt with through collective actions. In particular, in many cases this agency implies choices of allocating material and non-material resources and regulating individual and collective behavior, which amounts to the exercise of power. When these choices must be legitimated in the name of common interests, or common good, they usually fall within the competence and power of political authorities, which in the Western experience are legitimated through democratic representation. Precisely for the combination of these reasons we consider them to be "political". The case study shows that the intertwined processes of depoliticization and politicization can produce a style of tackling collective issues in which only some of the political characteristics of collective action disappear, if at all. The remaining ones are distributed rather differently between political and, until recently, non-political actors who fill possible political voids. As concerns the latter, the legitimation of collective action does not come from democracy, but from the influential quality of an idea in order to adapt to adversity.

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